

As a digital consumer, I am concerned greatly about the proposed Broadcast Flag. I enjoy the control capabilities that technology gives me. Current technology gives me fair usage capabilities such allowing me to record a television program and watch it later. The broadcast flag seems designed to remove this control and flexibility that I enjoy.

Historically, the law has allowed for those not affiliated with creating content to come up with new, unanticipated ways of using it. For example, Sony invented the modern VCR -- a movie studio did not. (Sony did not own a movie studio at the time.). Also, one speaking for those in hollywood compared the vcr to the boston strangler at the time, which has proved to be utterly false, as the movie industry has thrived since the vcr's widespread adoption. Because the broadcast flag defines what uses are authorized and which are not, unanticipated uses of content which are not foreseeable today are by default unauthorized. If we allow the content industry to "lock in" the definition of what is and is not legitimate use, we curtail the ability for future innovation - unanticipated but legal uses that will benefit consumers.

Also, Hollywood's method of choice for device interconnectivity in terms of video (DVI), would drive the cost of equipment much higher than it should be (as this interface requires that mpeg decoders be in every device that sends/receives videos). All of this hassel is rediculous and a sign that the hollywood tycoons are trying at any cost to forcibly hold together an antiquated business strategy that was feasible 20 years ago, but is doomed for death today and tomorrow.

I am a law-abiding consumer who believes that piracy should be prevented and prosecuted. However, if theoretical prevention comes at the cost of prohibiting me from making legal, personal use of my content, then the FCC should be working to protect all consumers rather than enable those who would restrict consumer rights. In the case of the broadcast flag, it seems that it will have little effect on piracy. With file-sharing networks, a TV program has only to be cracked once, and it will propagate rapidly across the Internet. So, while I may be required to purchased consumer electronic devices that cost more and allow me to do less, piracy will not be diminished.

In closing, I urge you to require the content industry to demonstrate that its proposed technologies will allow for all legal uses and will actually achieve the stated goal of preventing piracy. If they cannot, I urge you not to mandate the broadcast flag.